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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Charitable Institute for Protecting Social Victims, a non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 January 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Violence against Children*

Many factors underlie violence in the community, including poverty, discrimination, social exclusion, lack of access to social services and healthy recreation, food insecurity, deficiencies in governance, repressive and militarized action from security forces and the presence of organized crime. These factors may be not only causes, but also consequences of violence.

In the all abovementioned causes, armed violence compromises children's rights and is associated with serious risks for their development and safety, causing children to be injured, disabled, traumatized, exploited, orphaned, imprisoned and at times killed. Living in a community affected by armed violence has consequences for children who are targeted as well as those who witness or feel threatened by such an environment. Armed violence disrupts social harmony and family life, interrupts schooling, compromises health care, undermines economic development and generates fear which limits children's ability to move freely, participate in the life of their community, enjoy childhood and develop as empowered citizens.

In recent years, the world witnesses that armed violence and terrorism has increasingly been associated with violent extremism, with groups that support or use violence to achieve ideological or political goals, sometimes distorting religious values to legitimize their action. Violent extremism endangers the safety and human rights of children including through murder, rape, kidnapping and displacement. An additional sinister dimension is the incitement of young people to commit violent acts, including by promoting their engagement as child soldiers and suicide bombers. Transcending nationality, religion or ethnicity, the destructive combination of these three phenomena is a global concern that undermines peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian action.

Children exposed to gun violence may experience negative short and long-term psychological effects, including anger, withdrawal, post-traumatic stress, and desensitization to violence, sleep disturbances, intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event, difficulty concentrating in the classroom, a decline in academic performance, and lower educational and career aspirations. Other outcomes include increased delinquency, risky sexual behaviors, and substance abuse. The effects are more acute for children who are direct victims of gun violence, or who live in communities where they witness gun violence repeatedly

Protecting children from the impact of armed violence in the community is a priority concern for all part of the society, because they are the future of the world. So the charitable institute for protecting social victims and International Society for Supporting Victims of Terrorism urge the human rights council and its mandate holders, specially the Special Representative of the secretary General on Violence against children to recall the member states:

- Implementation of comprehensive and data-driven national action plans on the prevention and elimination of armed violence
- incorporation of restorative justice approaches at all levels of the criminal justice system
- Investment in comprehensive, integrated and prevention approach

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*International Society for supporting Victims of Terrorism, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.